

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIMA 04265 102121Z

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ACTION ARA-10

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SUBJECT: RUMBLINGS OF DISCONTENT FROM THE UNIVERSITIES

SUMMARY: IN RECENT DAYS THERE HAVE BEEN MORE THAT THE USUAL SIGNS OF DISCONTENT AND FRUSTRATION FROM PERU'S CHAOTIC AND TRADITIONALLY ANTI-MILITARY UNIVERSITIES. PUBLIC SUTDENT AND STAFF PROTESTS INDICATE THAT SEVERE BUDGETARY RESTRAINTS ARE UNDERMINING THE OPERATION OF SEVERAL MAJOR CAMPUSES. MOST POLITICALLY-ACTIVE STUDENTS REMAIN FIXED EMOTIONALLY AND IDEOLOGICALLY IN OPPOSITION TO THE MILITARY REGIME. THE GOP TENUOUSLY INFLUENCES THE UNIVERSITIES THROUGH ITS RECTORS AND INTENTIONALLY DISREGARDS THE FESTERING PROBLEMS OF MALADMINISTRATION AND ACADEMIC DRIFT. DIALOGUE REMAINS AT A MINIMAL LEVEL BETWEEN THE GOP AND THE UNIVERSITIES, AND VILLENENT CONFRONTATION IS NOT OUT OF THE QUESTION. END SUMMARY.

1. ON MAY 5 STUDENTS OF SAN MARCOS UNIVERSITY OCCUPIED THE OLD UNIVERSITY QUARTERS IN CENTRAL LIMA, A SITE WHICH IS NOW A MUSEUM AND USED MAILY FOR SPECIAL ACADEMIC EVENTS. THE STUDENTS WERE PROTESTING ABYSMAL PHYSICAL CONDITIONS, ALLGED ADMINSTRATIVE IRREGULARITIES IN THE ADMISSION OF STUDENTS, AND THE DETENTION OF MEDICAL STUDENT SARA DIAZ. IN THE AFTERNOON OF MAY 6, PLICE DROVE THE SUTDENTS FROM TH PREMISES.

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PAGE 02 LIMA 04265 102121Z

2. A FEW BLOCKS IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION FROM THE SAN MARCOS

SIT-IN, STUDENTS AT VILLAREAL UNIVERSITY ARE ONCE MORE UP IN ARMS AGAINST A GOP MOVE TO ENLARGE A UNIVERSITY REFORM COMMISSION FROM THREE TO SIX MEMBERS. GROUPS CLAIMING TO REPRESENT STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF HAVE PUBLICLY DENOUNCED THE GOP INITIATIVE AS AN ATTEMPT TO PACK THE COMMISSION WITH PREJUDICED AGENTS WHO WILL UNDERMINE THE INTEGRITY OF THE UNIVERSITY.

3. ACROSS THE RIVER RIMAC, THE ALWAYS VOLATILE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF ENGINEERING ALSO HAS A NEW CRISIS. ITS RECTOR AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS RESIGNED THIS WEEK FOLLOWING PUBLIC CHARGES BY STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF THAT THE UNIVERSITY IS IN A VIRTUAL STATE OF "CHAOTIC ANARCHY" BECAUSE OF THE INABILITY OF THE ACADEMIC AUTHORITIES TO MAINTAIN DISCIPLINE ON THE CAMPUS.

4. RICARDO PALMA UNIVERSITY, ONE OF LIMA'S LARGER PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES, HAS ALSO BEEN MUCH IN THE NEWS WITH FREQUENT REPORTS OF FISCAL BANKRUPTCY, ADMINISTRATIVE PASSIVITY, AND STUDENT PROTESTS FOLLOWING A RECENT GOP SHAKE-UP OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE.

5. ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY, MAJOR UNIVERSITIES APPEAR TO BE PROCEEDING WITH END OF SEMESTER EXAMS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SAN AGUSTIN IN AREQUIPA, WHOSE FIRST SEMESTER OPENING HAS BEEN DELAYED THREE MONTHS UNTIL JUNE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE RECTOR FOUND THE ATMOSPHERE SO VOLATILE FOLLOWING LATE 1975 CAMPUS AND STREET CLASHES THAT HE WANTED ADDITIONAL TIME FOR THE STUDENTS TO COOL OFF.

6. COMMENT: GOP CIRCLES HAVE BEEN PUBLICLY CONCEDING FOR MONTHS THAT PERU'S HIGHER EDUCATION IS IN AN ACADEMIC, BUDGETARY AND DISCIPLINARY CRISIS. THE GOP DOES NOT ADMIT TO STUDENT CHARGES THAT THE DETERIORATING SCENE HAS BEEN DELIBERATELY ENCOURAGED AS A STRATEGY CALCULATED TO WEAKEN THE UNIVERSITIES AND BRING THEM TO TERMS WITH THE MILITARY REVOLUTION. THE STUDENT ARGUMENT IS THAT AFTER PASSAGE OF THE FIRST AND THUS FAR ONLY REVOLUTIONARY STATUTE PERTAINING TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN 1972, THE MILITARY REGIME CONCLUDED (CORRECTLY WE BELIEVE) THAT ONLY A MAXIMUM EFFORT WOULD FORCE THE CAMPUSES TO SURRENDER THEIR TRADITIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND ALIGN WITH THE NEW NATIONAL EXPERIMENT. THE ARGUMENT CONTINUES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 LIMA 04265 102121Z

THAT THE GOP THUS SETTLED FOR IMPOSING ITS OWN RECTORS ON THE TWENTY-ONE PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES AND SETTING BROAD POLICIES THROUGH ITS NATIONAL PERUVIAN UNIVERSITY COUNCIL, (CONUP), WHICH IS COMPOSED OF KEY RECTORS. GOP DID NOT SEEK TO IMPOSE DETAILED REFORMS UPON ALL THE NOOKS AND CRANNIES OF CAMPUS RESISTANCE. HOWEVER ARGUMENT CONCLUDES, THE GOP HAS RESTRICTED BUDGETARY SUPPORT AND WAITED FOR THE CAMPUSES TO SINK TO THEIR INSTITUTIONAL KNEES.

7. WHETHER AS A RESULT OF SUCH A CALCULATED GOP STRATEGY OR
SIMPLE BUDGETARY INABILITY TO SUPPORT PERU'S NUMEROUS
UNIVERSITIES, MOST INSTITUTIONS APPEAR TO BE STRUGGLING VAINLY
UNDER THE GROWING PRESSURES OF STUDENT EXPECTATIONS, FALLING
INCOMES, AND AMBIVALENT AUTHORITY. THE PUTATIVE GOP STRATEGY
MAY WORK, BUT THE SIGNS OF VITALITY FROM THE CAMPUS GROUPS,
MOST OF THEM CONSIDERABLY TO THE LEFT IDEOLOGICALLY OF THE GOP,
SUGGEST THE SEEDS OF MORE OPEN CONFRONTATION ARE GROWING. THIS
IS A PROSPECT THAT CANNOT BE PLEASING TO MORALES BERMUDEZ
IF HE IS TRYING TO LAUNCH A SIX-YEAR PHASE OF DIALOGUE AND
GRADUALLY-INCREASED CITIZEN PARTICIPATION. NOT SURPRISING, THE
MAY 7 PRESS ANNOUNCED YET ONE MORE EMERGENCY SESSION OF CONUP
TO DEAL WITH THE "DISTURBING PROBLEMS" AT SEVERAL NATIONAL UNIVERSITI
ES.
CONUP IS, HOWEVER, ALREADY BADLY OVER-EXTENDED.
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